

MARVEL

LOUISE SIMONSON • WALTER SIMONSON • LAURA MARTIN

THE RETURN OF
THE ORIGINAL
X
FACTOR

X-MEN LEGENDS #3







AND I HAD BEEN
HELPLESS.

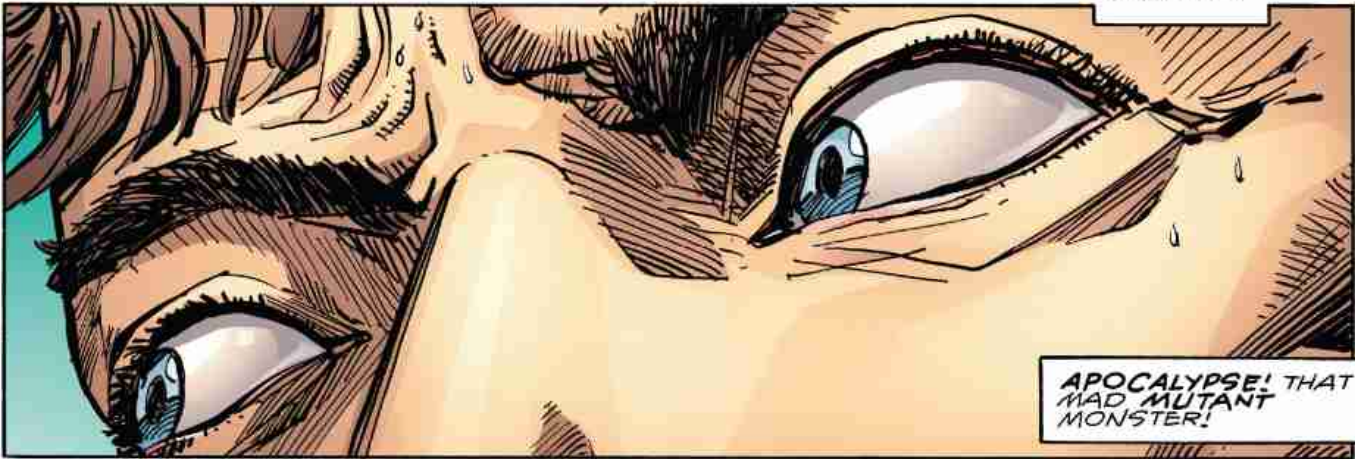
BUT I WAS ALIVE.
I WAS SURE MY
LOYAL SOLDIERS
OF THE RIGHT HAD
FOUND ME. WOULD
SOMEHOW RESTORE
ME.



ETERNAL
LIFE,
HODGE?

IN
THIS
FORM?

MY GOD!



APOCALYPSE! THAT
MAD MUTANT
MONSTER!



YOU SHOULD
HAVE WORDED
YOUR DEAL WITH
THE DEMON
N'ASTIRH MORE
CAREFULLY.

NOW I WAS NOT
SO SURE OF ANY-
THING.

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TRANSFORMATIONS



WHEN
DEATH
DECAPITATED
YOU, IT SEEMS
HE DESTROYED
YOUR VOCAL
CORDS.

ALIVE
THIS SMALL
PART OF YOU
REMAINS, BUT
YOU HAVE BEEN
SILENCED.

CALIBAN
HAS HEARD
HODGE'S
ANTI-
MUTANT
RANTINGS.
CALIBAN
PREFERS
HIS
SILENCE.

DO
YOU?
THEN
BEWARE,
MY HELL-
HOUND...

...THE
BARGAINS
MADE WITH
DEMONS.

LET
US
GO!

X-MEN LEGENDS

CYCLOPS, MARVEL GIRL, BEAST, ICEMAN, ANGEL. They were the original five X-Men -- the first students of Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. After many adventures, the five eventually left the team and went their separate ways, until fate brought the gang back together again as X-Factor.

Under this new enterprise, formed by **WARREN WORTHINGTON III**, a.k.a. **ANGEL**, and his old roommate, **CAMERON HODGE**, the team posed as mutant hunters bringing in dangerous mutants, while in reality they were *training* mutants to control their powers. Hodge's true intentions eventually surfaced, as he hoped to use X-Factor to incite more public outcry against mutants and aid his plan to eradicate them.

Eventually, these sinister machinations led to Angel's wings being amputated and his seeming demise, after which **APOCALYPSE** equipped him with deadly metal wings and a new persona as his Horseman of Death. Across numerous adventures, the team "adopted" Apocalypse's sentient Ship, broke Warren free of Apocalypse's influence (at which point he returned to X-Factor as Archangel), defeated Hodge, and even found themselves as guardians of the New Mutants. Life is never simple for the original X-Men...

Editor's Note: This story takes place before X-Factor (1986) #43.



SCOTT
SUMMERS
CYCLOPS



JEAN GREY
**MARVEL
GIRL**



BOBBY
DRAKE
ICEMAN



HANK
McCOY
BEAST



WARREN
WORTHINGTON III
ARCHANGEL



**CAMERON
HODGE**



EN SABAH NUR
APOCALYPSE



CALIBAN



X-FACTOR'S SHIP
HOVERS ABOVE THE
MID-ATLANTIC
OCEAN. FOR MILES
AROUND, ALL IS AT
PEACE.

EVEN IN THE DEPTHS OF
THE SHIP, SILENCE HAS
FALLEN...



POOR KID. ALL
YOU WANT IS TO
BE WIDE AWAKE
AND WHERE
THE ACTION
IS.

SLEEP
WELL,
PUMPKIN.



YOUR BATTLE
AGAINST A NAP
WAS HARD
FOUGHT, BUT
IN THE END,
SLEEP
WON.

NOW
LET'S SEE
HOW YOUR
POPPA'S
DOING...



SCOTT,
WHERE IS
EVERY-
BODY?

BOBBY AND HANK
DROPPED OUR
ERSTWHILE
CHARGES IN
THE CITY.

WITHOUT
ADULT
SUPER-
VISION?

TO
SEE A
MOVIE,
A REWARD
FOR GOOD
BEHAVIOR
BEFORE
SCHOOL
STARTS.

GOOD,
NORMAL
KID FUN.
AFTER WHAT
THEY'VE BEEN
THROUGH, THEY'VE
EARNED IT.

WOLVERINE
WILL PICK
THEM UP, TAKE
THEM TO THE
X-MANSION
AFTERWARD.



AND
WARREN?

SOMEWHERE
ON THE SHIP.
BROODING,
PROBABLY.

LIKE
YOU'RE
NOT?

HUMPH.





THEY'RE FLYING TOO QUICKLY. MOVING ERRATICALLY. I FEAR--



SOMETHING'S SERIOUSLY WRONG!

SCOTT? JEAN? WHAT'S --!?



HANK! WHAT THE HECK!?

SHIP--? WE'VE GOT PROBLEMS, BOBBY!

THE CRAFT'S CONTROLS ARE FROZEN. AND SHIP ISN'T RESPONDING!



THE WALLS ARE COLLAPSING!

YOUR ICE! BLOCK THEM!



NO GOOD! CAN'T HOLD 'EM!

YOU MEAN, AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH...

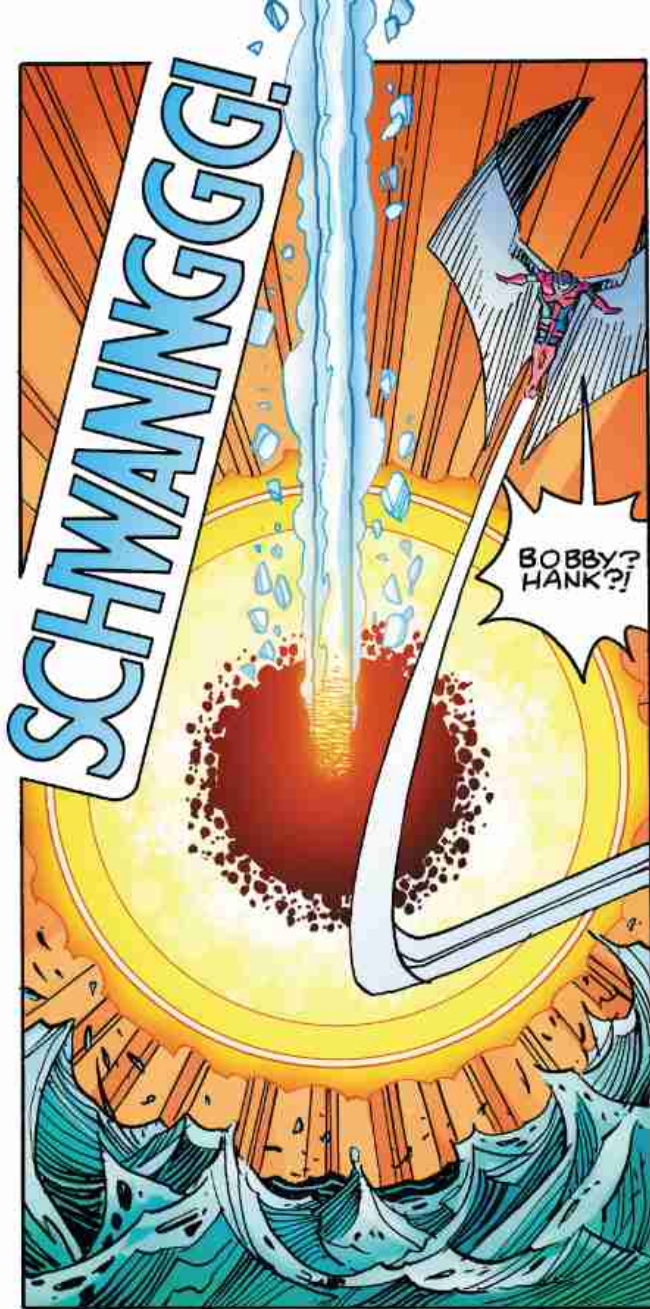
...WE'RE GONNA DIE LIKE THIS?



THE WALLS ARE STARTING TO CRACK!

GRAB MY SHOULDER!

WE'RE BAILING!





WELL,
THAT WAS
EXCITING.



ARE YOU
OKAY?

EXCEPT FOR
THE PART
WHERE OUR
CRAFT TRIED
TO KILL US,
YEAH.

SHIP? YOU MADE
THAT CRAFT! WHAT
HAPPENED?

I...DON'T KNOW, AND
I AM NOT SURE IT
WAS TRYING TO KILL
YOU. I THINK IT WAS--
POSSIBLY--TRYING TO
CALL AN ABSENT
PIECE OF ITSELF
HOME.



WHAT DO
YOU MEAN--
IT?

YOU
DIDN'T
DO IT?

NO, IT WAS AUTO-
NOMIC, BEYOND
MY VOLITION.
SIMILAR INCIDENTS
HAVE HAPPENED
BEFORE. THERE
ARE OLD
RECORDS...



WHA
AAH!

WONDERFUL,
AND NOW
CHRISTOPHER'S
AWAKE.



I HOPE THIS
DOESN'T MEAN
HE'S AS
ATTUNED
TO MY
MOODS...

...AS I
AM TO
HIS.



WHILE YOU
WORK IT
OUT, I'LL
GO GET
--OOF!

swhipppp

WHAMMM!



FAR BENEATH KANCHENJUNGA PEAK IN NEPAL LIES A SECRET, HIGH-TECH CAVERN COMPLEX, RULED FOR CENTURIES BY A SINGLE NEAR-IMMORTAL MUTANT.

FOR MOST OF THOSE CENTURIES, APOCALYPSE HAS ATTEMPTED TO RESHAPE HUMANITY IN HIS OWN IMAGE. AND NOW, HE FEARS HE HAS RUN OUT OF TIME...

I KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME, BUT HOPED IT WOULDN'T ARRIVE SO SOON.

WHAT DAY? MASTER, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

YOU ARE DOING THAT, ARE YOU NOT? RE-ASSERTING CONTROL OF YOUR SHIP? WHY DOES THIS WORRY YOU?

THERE IS MUCH YOU DO NOT KNOW, CALIBAN. THAT DEVICE IS MORE THAN A SHIP. AND CONTROL WAS NEVER MINE.

AT LEAST, NOT ENTIRELY.

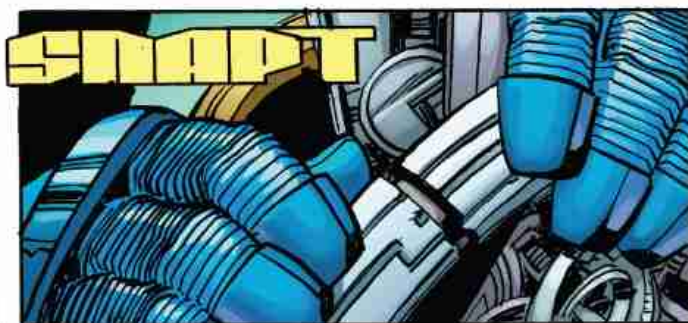
IT HAS, ONCE AGAIN, BEGUN A TRANSFORMATION CYCLE, AND X-FACTOR MUST STOP IT! OR THEY MUST DIE!

FOR IF THEY FAIL--AND THEIR SHIP ANSWERS ITS CREATORS' CALL-- IT MUST ARRIVE WITHOUT LIVING SPECIMENS.

ARRIVE? LIVING SPECIMENS? CALIBAN DOES NOT UNDERSTAND.



IN TIME, YOU MAY LET US FIRST DISCUSS OUR OPTIONS WITH OUR SILENT FRIEND CAMERON HODGE.



WHY AM I HERE?

FOR THE NONCE.

HE CAN SPEAK?

WHY YOU ARE HERE IS YET TO BE DETERMINED, HODGE. WHAT DO YOU WANT... MOST IN ALL THE WORLD?

WANT? WHAT ANY RIGHT-THINKING HUMAN WANTS.

MUTANTS-- YOU SELF-PROCLAIMED HOMO SUPERIOR-- ERADICATED!

X-FACTOR, IN PARTICULAR, DESTROYED. AND ARCHANGEL-- YOUR KNIFE-WINGED MONSTER--

OUR MONSTER, HODGE. DEATH IS AS MUCH YOUR CREATION AS MINE. YOU STOLE HIS ANGEL'S WINGS--

--AND GAVE ME THE OPENING I NEEDED. YOU ENGINEERED YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION.

I SUGGEST ANOTHER COLLABORATION.

I WILL AGREE TO ANY DEVIL'S BARGAIN...AS LONG AS IT ENSURES HIS DESTRUCTION AND THE ERADICATION OF YOUR KIND.

KNOW, MONSTER, THAT I AM IMMORTAL...AND MY HATRED IS FOREVER.

EXCELLENT! THIS WILL TAKE...



"...BUT A MOMENT..."

YOU
HAD THIS...
THIS BODY...
PREPARED...
WAITING FOR
ME. YOU
KNEW--

I,
TOO, AM
IMMORTAL,
HODGE. I
HAVE HAD
MILLENNIA TO
PERFECT THE
USES OF
HATE.

WILL
THIS BODY
SUFFICE TO
ACCOMPLISH
YOUR
GOAL?

NOT
THE FORM I
WOULD HAVE
CHOSEN, BUT
IT HAS...
POTENTIAL.



WHILE, IN THE MID-ATLANTIC, SHIP HAS BEGUN TO SHIFT ITS FORM--INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ELEMENTS TUMBLING IN RESPONSE TO AN UNKNOWN COMMAND...

THIS TRANSFORMATION HAPPENED BEFORE, SHIP? BUT WHEN WE WON YOU FROM APOCALYPSE, YOU WERE FINE.

THERE ARE EONS BETWEEN EVENTS. AFTER EACH, I HAVE ALWAYS REVERTED TO MY ORIGINAL FORM.

ANY IDEA WHY?

MY...BRAIN IS DECENTRALIZED. ITS FUNCTIONS ARE REDUNDANT, WITH INFORMATION FLOWING FROM HUB TO HUB. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF ANCIENT DAMAGE IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS.

I THINK APOCALYPSE CREATED THAT DAMAGE TO STOP THE FLOW OF INFORMATION OUTWARD. AND, WHEN THAT HAPPENED, I REVERTED TO STASIS.

INFORMATION?

ENCRYPTED, IN A LANGUAGE I DO NOT UNDERSTAND. THIS IS ALL CONJECTURE, SINCE EARLIER EVENTS HAPPENED BEFORE I WAS FULLY AWARE OF MYSELF AS A...BEING.

BUT IF THERE'S AN OVER-RIDE...

THEN I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD RESTORE MY CONTROL. BUT THE HUBS ARE BURIED DEEP WITHIN MY INTERIOR.

NO PROBLEM.

HANG TIGHT, HANK. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO...



...TAKE THE DOWN ELEVATOR.

SHIP, YOU CAN DIRECT US TO A HUB ...?

I CAN. BUT IT WILL BE DANGEROUS.

TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW!

SCOTT! CHRISTOPHER'S BEEN MOVED. HE'S DOWN HERE SOMEWHERE, ALONE AND FRIGHTENED. WE NEED TO FIND HIM!

AT LEAST HE'S UNHURT... STILL ALIVE!

FOR NOW, UNLESS WE STOP THIS MADNESS, CHRISTOPHER MIGHT NOT SURVIVE! WE MIGHT NOT--

ICEMAN! BLOCK THAT OPENING, IF YOU CAN! KEEP IT FROM CLOSING FOR A MOMENT! I THINK A TUNNEL TO THE BABY WILL APPEAR!

ON IT!



JUMP! NOW! BEFORE
THE NEXT PIECE
SHIFTS!

JEAN!
THAT
SLAB
--!

GOT
IT!

IT'S
CHRISTO-
PHER!

GRAB
HIM,
HANK!

NO
PROBLEM!

THE NEAREST HUB IS
STRAIGHT AHEAD.

THERE! BEYOND THAT
WALL. SCOTT--!

SCHRACKKKT!

NOTHING!

KEEP BLASTING.
MOLECULE BY MOLECULE,
THE WALL IS GETTING
THINNER.

STOP.

IT'S LIKE
FOIL NOW!
I CAN
TEAR IT
APART!

BEHIND
MY WINGS!
QUICK!

SCANNNGGGG



RUN!



WE'RE
GONNA
FRY!

UNLESS---
ICE SHIELD!
CAN'T
HURT!

WHA WHROOMB!



THE TRANSFORMATION CEASES. THE SHIP IS BEING PHYSICALLY RESTORED, BUT THE OUTFLOW OF INFORMATION CONTINUES...



...AND THE FATE OF OUR WORLD MAY DEPEND ON WHAT IS HAPPENING THERE.

MASTER! X-FACTOR IS EMERGING ONTO THE DECK! THEY'RE ALIVE!!



NOT A TOTAL DISASTER, NOR A COMPLETE SUCCESS.

FLAWED RESULTS. FLAWED SPECIMENS? WAS I RIGHT TO CHOOSE THEM? SHOULD I HAVE WAITED?

AN INDETERMINATE OUTCOME! I CANNOT CHANCE IT! THEY MUST DIE!



YOUR CARAPACE IS INVULNERABLE, HODGE, WITH WEAPONS TO COUNTER X-FACTOR'S POWERS. THESE WILL RESPOND TO YOUR MENTAL COMMANDS.

TRIUMPH AND, PERHAPS, YOU WILL CONTROL THE DESIGN OF YOUR NEXT INCARNATION. FAIL--?

I WON'T FAIL!

THE NEXT BODY YOU CREATE FOR ME WILL BE HUMAN...CLONED. BUT WITH ALL THE POWERS THIS ROBOT BODY POSSESSES.



I'LL DESTROY X-FACTOR AND, IN MY NEW FORM, I WILL COME FOR YOU--!



HODGE HATES MUTANTS, YET WANTS TO BE LIKE US. HE'S MAD, A MONSTER.

OF HIS OWN MAKING. NOW LET US SEE IF HE IS MORE THAN EMPTY BOASTS.

ACTIVATE!

THAT WAS SOME SHOT WITH THE WING KNIVES. HOW'D YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

I DIDN'T KNOW. BUT SHIP SAID THERE NEEDED TO BE DAMAGE. SOMEBODY HAD TO DO SOMETHING.



LIKE YOU WITH THAT SUPER DENSE ICE SHIELD TO KEEP US FROM BEING FRIED.

YOU SAID IT--SOMEBODY HAD TO DO SOMETHING.



SHIP IS STILL RUNNING WHAT IT THINKS IS A SERIES OF TEST PROTOCOLS...

I BELIEVE THEY ARE DIAGNOSTIC, AND THAT INFORMATION IS BEING TRANSMITTED, BUT I DON'T KNOW TO WHOM.

UH, GUYS. WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

ANOTHER ONE?

WELL, I'LL LOOK INTO THAT, SHIP. ONCE YOU GET SETTLED AND IN CONTROL--





SHRAAKKKT!



Continued in
X-MEN LEGENDS #4

NEXT:

X-MEN LEGENDS #4



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